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British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

MEMO

12 November 1986

Memo on the four East Timorese students in Jakarta

Further to our Memo of 10 November, we were informed yesterday by the Portuguese Embassy in London that the Portuguese Government has already instructed the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta to issue passports and to purchase Jakarta-Lisbon air tickets for the four students. However, according to the Portuguese Embassy here, the sticking point is the exit visa which the Indonesians say the students must have before being allowed to leave Indonesia.

We consider this to be an impossible situation, placing the students in virtual Indonesian captivity. We have therefore strongly urged the Portuguese authorities to take positive action to remove the students from Indonesian jurisdiction, disregarding the question of an exit visa. We have set out our arguments in a letter to the Portuguese Foreign Minister (see overleaf).

In view of the fact that the Portuguese authorities here in London were very willing to discuss the matter, we have decided not to proceed with our plan to send a delegation. The Embassy had been informed this was our intention and responded by entering into communication with us, in order to avoid any public expression of concern on our part.

Our decision to abandon the plans for Friday should not affect your own decision, however. We feel that if each group could pressure the embassy in their country by means of action along the lines we suggested in the earlier Memo, taking on board the latest information we have about the passports and tickets, we may succeed in persuading the Portuguese Government to move in a direction that could extricate the students from their present extremely dangerous situation.